

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

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C O R R E C T E D COPY(LINE 1 PARA 2 OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SREF, WZ

SUBJECT: SWAZILAND CRACKDOWN ON PAC/S

1. DEPTOFF MET WITH SWAZI AMBASSADOR KUNENE APRIL 24
TO DISCUSS REFUGEE SITUATION IN WAKE OF GOS ROUNDUP OF
PAC/S ACTIVISTS AND SYMPATHIZERS. DEPTOFF EXPRESSED
APPRECIATION FOR GOS CLARIFICATIONS OF EVENTS IN LIGHT
OF CONTRADICTORY ACCOUNTS WHICH HAD CIRCULATED IN
ABSENCE OF OFFICIAL EXPLANATIONS. HOWEVER, HE EXPRESSED
CONCERN THAT IN ADMITTEDLY CONFUSED AND FAST-BREAKING
SITUATION, CRACKDOWN MAY ALSO HAVE RESULTED IN ARRESTS
OF BONA FIDE REFUGEES NOT INVOLVED IN PAC ACTIVITIES.
GOS USE OF SECURITY DETENTION LAWS RATHER THAN LODGING
OF PUBLIC CHARGES MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR OTHERS TO ASSESS
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THE GOS' CONTENTION THAT IT HAD EVIDENCE OF SUBVERSIVE
ACTIVITIES BY DETAINEES. SWAZI GENEROSITY IN ACCEPTING
REFUGEES WAS IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO COOLING TENSIONS
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND US HOPED WELCOME WOULD NOT NOW BE
WITHDRAWN BECAUSE IT MAY HAVE BEEN ABUSED BY SOME. SOME
CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER US FIGURES FEARED THIS MIGHT
HAPPEN, AND GOS SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR POSSIBLE EXPRESS-

IONS OF CONCERN FROM INTERESTED PERSONS SUCH AS BLACK CAUCUS MEMBERS.

2. KUNENE SAID HE WISHED THAT SOME OF THE WESTERN SYMPATHY FOR THE REFUGEES COULD BE SPARED FOR THE SWAZIS, WHO HAD TAKEN THEM IN AND THEN HAD BEEN "BETRAYED". IN RESPONSE TO DEPTOFF'S SPECIFIC QUESTION, THE US COULD REST ASSURED THAT NONE WOULD BE DEPORTED TO SOUTH AFRICA. IN FACT, IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO DEPORT THEM AT ALL SINCE NO AFRICAN COUNTRY WISHED TO ACCEPT "REFUGEES" WHO HAD VIOLATED THE CONDITIONS OF THEIR ENTRY AND HAD TURNED AGAINST THEIR HOSTS. THEY HAD BEEN ACCEPTED AS REFUGEES, NOT AS GUERRILLA ACTIVISTS. SWAZILAND COULD NOT AFFORD TO ANTAGONIZE MOZAMBIQUE AND SOUTH AFRICA, AND CERTAINLY NOT BOTH AT ONCE. IT WAS DETERMINED NOT TO BECOME ANOTHER LEBANON.

3. KUNENE SAID THE SWAZI POLICE HAD ACTUALLY BEEN UNAWARE THAT CERTAIN OF THE REFUGEES WERE SECRETLY CONSTRUCTING A MILITARY TRAINING CAMP IN SOUTHERN SWAZILAND. THEIR FIRST INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CAME FROM LIBALO, WHO FLEW TO SWAZILAND TO WARN THE GOS AND PROVIDE IT WITH A LIST OF NAMES OF PAC/S MEMBERS NO LONGER UNDER THE DISCIPLINE OF THE PAC CENTRAL COMMITTEE. KUNENE SAID HE PERSONALLY HAD ADVISED CONFIDENTIAL

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AGAINST MAKING ARRESTS ON THE BASIS OF LIBALO'S LIST BECAUSE THAT WOULD INVOLVE THE GOS TOO CLOSELY IN WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY AN INTERNAL POWER STRUGGLE IN THE PAC. HOWEVER, HE AND OTHER ADVISORS URGED THAT ANY REFUGEES WHO HAD ACTUALLY BROKEN THEIR AGREEMENT NOT TO UNDERTAKE MILITARY ACTIVITIES ON SWAZI SOIL BE PROMPTLY ARRESTED. THIS ACCOUNTED FOR THE FACT THAT SOME REFUGEES WHO WERE NOT OPENLY AFFILIATED WITH PAC HAD BEEN DETAINED WHILE SOME KNOWN PAC MEMBERS WERE STILL FREE. HE SAID SOME HAD EVEN PRESENTED THEMSELVES TO THE GOS ASKING IF THEY WERE TO BE ARRESTED AND HAD BEEN TOLD THAT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE AGAINST THEM.

4. DEPTOFF RETURNED TO THEME THAT USE OF DETENTION PROVISIONS AND RESULTING LACK OF PUBLIC CHARGES MADE IT HARD FOR WORLD TO UNDERSTAND THIS SWAZI SIDE OF STORY. WAS THERE ANY CHANCE DETAINEES' CASES MIGHT BE TRANSFERRED INTO PUBLIC COURT WHERE FACTS COULD BE ESTABLISHED AND INNOCENT PROTECTED? KUNENE SAID HE COULD GIVE NO INDICATION OF CABINET INTENTIONS IN THIS REGARD. HE ADMITTED THAT GOS DID NOT GIVE

ADEQUATE ATTENTION TO EXPLAINING OR JUSTIFYING ITS ACTION TO WORLD OPINION BUT SAID THE PAC ITSELF WAS APPROACHING SELECTED AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO TELL THEM THAT THE GOS ACTIONS HAD ITS (PAC CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S)

FULL SUPPORT.

5. IN CLOSING, KUNENE PROMISED TO LOOK INTO RELATED CASE OF MOZAMBICAN REFUGEES DETAINED PENDING ACCEPTANCE BY THIRD COUNTRY. HE SAID IN REGARD TO BOTH THIS AND SOUTH AFRICAN REFUGEES SWAZILAND SINCERELY WANTED TO COOPERATE WITH UNDERSTANDABLE US CONCERNS FOR HUMANITARIAN TREATMENT AND CONTINUED PROVISION OF ASYLUM. HOWEVER, IT WAS A VERY SMALL STATE WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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VERY LARGE NEIGHBORS AND HAD TO BE GUIDED BY SECURITY NEEDS. HE RECALLED THAT DEPTOFF HAD ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS INDICATED THAT SUPPORT FOR SWAZI INDEPENDENCE AND STABILITY WERE IMPORTANT US GOALS AND SAID HE FELT THIS OUGHT TO LEAD TO US SYMPATHY FOR CURRENT SWAZI ACTIONS.

6. COMMENT: KUNENE'S ACCOUNT OF GOS DELIBERATIONS OVER WHETHER TO MAKE SWEEPING ARRESTS ON BASIS OF PAC CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S "HIT LIST" OF PAC/S DISSIDENTS SHOWS THAT GOS AWARE OF DANGER OF BEING DRAWN INTO INTERNAL PAC POWER PLAY. IT REMAINS UNCLEAR TO WHAT EXTENT IT IS ALSO AWARE OF DANGERS OF OVERREACTING AGAINST REFUGEES BECAUSE PAC/S SUCCUMBED TO TEMPTATION TO RENEGE ON AGREEMENT TO RESPECT ITS SOVEREIGNTY. VANCE

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